



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

## 6306.0.55.001 - Microdata: Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia, May 2018

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## Summary

### Introduction

#### Introduction

This product provides a range of information about the release of microdata from the May 2018 Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours (EEH) including;

- Survey definitions and methodology
- How to use the Expanded Confidentialised Unit Record File (CURF)
- Data item list
- Conditions of use
- Quality of the microdata

Microdata are the most detailed information available from a survey and are generally the responses to individual questions on the questionnaire or data derived from two or more questions. This level of detail is released with approval of the Australian Statistician.

#### Available products

An Expanded CURF is available via the DataLab. Expanded CURFs allow more detail to be presented for some data items, for example, industry and occupation.

Further information about these services, and other information to assist users in understanding and accessing microdata in general, is available from the Microdata Entry Page. Before applying for access, users should read and familiarise themselves with the information contained in this product and the Responsible Use of ABS Microdata, User Guide.

#### Applying for access

To apply for access, register and apply through the Registration Centre.

Additional information including steps to gain access can be found in How to Apply for Microdata on the ABS website.

#### Further information

Further information about the survey and the microdata products can be found in the various pages associated with this product, including:

- A detailed list of data items for the Expanded CURF available on the Downloads tab.
- The Quality Declaration and Glossary relating to these products can be found on the Explanatory Notes tab.
- Detailed information about the survey, including published estimates, are available in Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia, May 2018 (cat. no. 6306.0).
- Other related products on the Related Information tab.

## **Support**

For further support in the use of this product, please contact Customised and Microdata Delivery on (02) 6252 7714 or via [microdata.access@abs.gov.au](mailto:microdata.access@abs.gov.au).

## **Data available on request**

Data collected in the survey but not included in the Expanded CURF may be available from the ABS, on request, as statistics in tabulated form.

Subject to confidentiality and sampling variability constraints, special tabulations can be produced incorporating data items, populations and geographic areas selected to meet individual requirements. These are available on request, on a fee for service basis. Contact the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070 or [client.services@abs.gov.au](mailto:client.services@abs.gov.au) for further information.

## **Privacy**

The ABS Privacy Policy outlines how the ABS handles any personal information that you provide to us.

# **Survey methodology**

## **Survey methodology**

Information about the May 2018 Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours, including summary results, are available in the publication Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia, May 2018 (cat. no. 6306.0).

Detailed information about the survey including survey design, scope and coverage, data collection methodology, estimation, a glossary, data quality and interpreting the results can be accessed from the Explanatory Notes page of that publication. In addition, published summary tables in Excel spreadsheet format, can be accessed from the Downloads tab.

# **Using the Expanded CURF**

## **Using the Expanded CURF**

### **About the Expanded CURF**

The data included in the May 2018 Employee Earnings and Hours (EEH) Expanded CURF is released under the provisions of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*. This legislation allows the Australian Statistician to release unit record data, or microdata, provided this is done “in a manner that is not likely to enable the identification of a particular person or organisation to which it relates”.

Steps to confidentialise the datasets made available on the Expanded CURF are undertaken in such a way as to ensure the integrity of the datasets and optimise their content, while maintaining the confidentiality of respondents. Intending purchasers should ensure that the data they require, at the level of detail they need are available on the CURF. The Data Items document on the Summary tab contains information about the list of data items, which is available as an Excel spreadsheet on the Downloads tab.

## **Identifiers**

Each employee record has a unique person identifier - ABSPID.

## **File contents**

The May 2018 EEH Expanded CURF can be accessed via the DataLab and is available in SAS, SPSS and STATA formats. The Expanded CURF comprises the following files:

### **Data files**

- SAS FILE: EEH18E.SAS7BDAT contains the CURF data in SAS format
- SPSS FILE: EEH18E.SAV contains the CURF data in SPSS format
- STATA FILE: EEH18E.DTA contains the CURF data in STATA format

### **Data item file**

- DATA ITEMS: contains all the data items, including details of categories and code values, that are available on the Expanded CURF.

## **Use of weights**

The survey was conducted on a sample of employees from a sample of employers in Australia, and as such users need to take this into account when deriving estimates from the Expanded CURF. Each employee record contains a weight (FINPRSWT) and this weight indicates how many employees in the survey scope population are represented by this employee. Where estimates are derived from the Expanded CURF, it is essential they are calculated using the weights.

An employee's chance of selection in the survey varied considerably, depending on their employer's state, sector, industry and size. If an employee's survey weight is ignored, then no account will be taken of the employee's chance of selection, and the resulting estimates may be biased.

A number of the weights in the Expanded CURF have been slightly modified from the original survey weights for confidentiality reasons. This reweighting process has not resulted in significant changes to the estimates and the statistical validity of the Expanded CURF is not affected.

## Earnings

Weekly earnings data items have been perturbed and are expressed as continuous data items (in whole dollars only) on the Expanded CURF. Perturbation is a process of slightly altering the reported values to prevent identification of respondents. The distribution of values is not changed significantly through perturbation and the statistical validity of aggregate data is not affected.

## Hours paid for

Hours paid for data were requested for all employees. However, hours paid for could not be provided for Managerial employees where there was no relationship between earnings and hours. As a result, data for hours paid for have only been produced for Managerial employees with a link between earnings and hours.

## Reconciliation of Expanded CURF with previously published data

Steps to confidentialise the data made available on the Expanded CURF are taken in such a way as to maximise the content of the file while maintaining the confidentiality of respondents. The steps taken to preserve confidentiality include:

- Omitting the States and Territories data item included in previously published output.
- Reducing the level of detail available for the Employer unit size data item (available on the Expanded CURF in two broad groups).
- Including industry data at the Division (1 digit) level only.
- Perturbing earnings data and employee record weights.

As a result, it may not be possible to exactly reconcile all statistics produced from the Expanded CURF with previously published statistics. However, these differences are not significant and should not diminish the value of the Expanded CURF in analysis.

## Data items

### Data items

The May 2018 Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours (EEH) comprised two components, the first being employer level information and the second a series of approximately 32 questions related to individual employees. Responses for individual employees are used to provide estimates of earnings and hours for specific groups of employees such as full-time/part-time employees and occupation groups.

Information provided on the questionnaire is supplemented by data sourced from the ABS Business Register (ABSBR), which allows the production of estimates of employees classified by industry, sector and employer size. Jurisdiction is also derived from a range of ABSBR classifications. Further information on the ABSBR is provided in the Explanatory Notes of Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia, May 2018 (cat. no. 6306.0).

The following data items are available on the May 2018 EEH Expanded CURF:

- Weekly total cash earnings

- Weekly ordinary time cash earnings
- Weekly overtime cash earnings
- Weekly amounts salary sacrificed
- Weekly total hours paid for
- Weekly ordinary time hours paid for
- Weekly overtime hours paid for
- Sector
- Rate of pay
- Whether received casual loading
- Full-time/Part-time status
- Sex
- Age
- Managerial status
- Employee status
- Type of employee
- Occupation major groups (1 digit ANZSCO)
- Occupation sub-major groups (2 digit ANZSCO)
- Occupation minor groups (3 digit ANZSCO)
- Industry division (1 digit ANZSIC 2006)
- Employer unit size
- Method of setting pay
- Jurisdiction
- Jurisdiction of registered agreement
- Weight
- Random person identifier

The survey was conducted on a sample of employees from a sample of employers in Australia, and as such users need to take this into account when deriving estimates from the Expanded CURF. The weight data item indicates how many employees in the survey scope population are represented by the individual unit record. As such, the sum of the weights for all unit records in a particular category provides an estimate of number of employees in that category.

Care should be taken in the interpretation and use of estimates of employment as the Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours is not designed specifically to produce estimates of numbers of employees. Users are directed to Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0) as the primary source for official ABS estimates of employment.

Where estimates are derived from the Expanded CURF, it is essential they are calculated using the weighted values of a given data item. An employee's chance of selection in the survey varied considerably, depending on their employer's state, sector, industry and size. If an employee's survey weight is ignored, then no account will be taken of the employee's chance of selection, and the resulting estimates may be biased.

Users intending to purchase the Expanded CURF should ensure that the data they require, at the level of detail they require, is available in this product. The data items list for the Expanded CURF, including relevant population and classification details, can be found in the Excel spreadsheet available from the Downloads tab. This should be used in conjunction with the Glossary found in the Explanatory Notes tab.

The Expanded CURF contains 54,105 confidentialised employee records. Subject to the limitations of the sample size and the data classifications used, it is possible to interrogate the Expanded CURF, produce tabulations and undertake statistical analyses to individual specifications.

Weekly ordinary time, overtime and total hours paid for data were requested for all employees. However, hours paid for could not be provided for Managerial employees where there was no relationship between earnings and hours. For these employees, a value of '0' has been applied to these data items in the Expanded CURF. It is therefore important to take this into account when undertaking analysis which includes weekly ordinary time, overtime and total hours paid or derivations such as hourly rates.

## Conditions of use

### Conditions of use

#### User responsibilities

The *Census and Statistics Act 1905* includes a legislative guarantee to respondents that their confidentiality will be protected. This is fundamental to the trust the Australian public has in the ABS, and that trust is in turn fundamental to the excellent quality of ABS information. Without that trust, survey respondents may be less forthcoming or truthful in answering our questionnaires. For more information, see 'Avoiding inadvertent disclosure' and 'Microdata' on the ABS web page [How the ABS keeps your information confidential](#).

#### Confidentiality

The release of microdata must satisfy the ABS legislative obligation to release information in a manner that is not likely to enable the identification of a particular person or organisation. Therefore, in accordance with the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, a confidentiality process is applied to data to avoid releasing information that may lead to the identification of individuals or businesses.

#### Confidentialised Unit Record Files (CURF)

Prior to being granted access to CURFs, each organisation's Responsible Officer must submit a CURF Undertaking to the ABS. The CURF Undertaking is required by legislation and states that, prior to CURFs being released to an organisation, a Responsible Officer must undertake to ensure that the organisation will abide by the conditions of use of CURFs. Individual users are bound by the undertaking signed by the Responsible Officer.

All CURF users are required to read and abide by the conditions and restrictions in the Responsible Use of ABS Microdata, User Guide. Any breach of the CURF Undertaking may result in withdrawal of service to individuals and/or organisations. Further information is contained in the [Consequences of Failing to Comply](#) web page.

#### Conditions of sale

All ABS products and services are provided subject to the ABS Conditions of Sale. Any queries relating to these Conditions of Sale should be emailed to [client.services@abs.gov.au](mailto:client.services@abs.gov.au)

#### Price

Microdata access is priced according to ABS Pricing Policy and Commonwealth Cost

Recovery Guidelines. For microdata prices refer to the Microdata Prices web page.

## **Apply for access**

To apply for access to microdata products, follow the registration instructions which are available via the Microdata Entry Page. Clients should familiarise themselves with the Responsible Use of ABS Microdata, User Guide and other related microdata information, before applying for access.

## **Australian universities**

The ABS/Universities Australia Agreement provides participating universities with access to a range of ABS products and services. This includes access to microdata. For further information, university clients should refer to the ABS/Universities Australia Agreement web page.

## **Further information**

The Microdata Entry Page on the ABS website contains links to microdata related information to assist users to understand and access microdata. For further information users should email [microdata.access@abs.gov.au](mailto:microdata.access@abs.gov.au) or telephone (02) 6252 7714.

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# **About this Release**

The Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours (EEH) is conducted every two years and designed to provide detailed statistics on the composition and distribution of employee earnings, hours paid for and the methods used to set employees' pay. Information is collected from a sample of employers about characteristics of both the employers (such as industry and sector) and their employees (such as occupation, type of employee, and method of setting pay).

This Confidentialised Unit Record File (CURF) provides statistics from the May 2018 EEH survey.

Access to the Expanded CURF is provided in the secure DataLab environment. Apply online for access to CURFs at [www.abs.gov.au/microdata/apply](http://www.abs.gov.au/microdata/apply)

# **Explanatory Notes**

## **Glossary**

### **Glossary**

## **Adult rate**

Payment at the full rate stipulated in an award, agreement or the minimum wage order in the relevant jurisdiction.

## **Apprentice or trainee rate**

Payment at a rate stipulated for apprentices or trainees in an award, agreement or the minimum wage order in the relevant jurisdiction.

## **Award only**

Awards are legally enforceable determinations made by federal or state industrial tribunals that set the terms of employment (pay and/or conditions), usually in a particular industry or occupation.

An award may be the sole mechanism used to set the pay and/or conditions for an employee or group of employees, or may be used in conjunction with an individual or collective agreement. Employees are classified to the Award only category if they are paid at the rate of pay specified in the Award and are not paid more than that rate of pay.

## **Cash earnings**

Remuneration paid to employees on a regular and frequent basis (quarterly or more frequently) for time worked or work done, and for time not worked such as recreation and other types of leave. Cash earnings (inclusive of amounts salary sacrificed) are gross amounts, that is, before tax and other items (e.g. superannuation) are deducted.

## **Casual employees**

Casual employees usually receive a higher rate of pay to compensate for lack of permanency and leave entitlements.

## **Collective agreement**

An agreement between an employer (or group of employers) and a group of employees (or one or more unions or employee associations representing the employees). A collective agreement sets the terms of employment (pay and/or conditions) for a group of employees, and is usually registered with a Federal or State industrial tribunal or authority.

Employees are classified to the Collective agreement category if they had the main part of their pay set by a collective agreement (registered or unregistered) or enterprise award.

## **Disability rate**

Payment rate stipulated in the National Minimum Wage Order (or an award or agreement with a specific schedule) for employees with a disability who:

- are unable to perform the range of duties to the competence level required of an employee within the class of work for which the employee is engaged because of the effects of disability on their productive capacity; and
- who meet the impairment criteria for receipt of a Disability Support Pension.

## **Employees**



Persons who worked for a private or public sector employer and received pay for the reference period in the form of wages or salaries, a commission while also receiving a retainer, tips, piece rates or payments in kind. Persons who operated their own incorporated enterprises with or without hiring employees are also included as employees.

### **Employer size**

A measure of the size of the business in terms of the number of employees within that business. The employer size reflects the size of the business in a particular state or territory and not necessarily the size of the business Australia-wide.

### **Full-time employees**

Full-time employees are permanent, temporary and casual employees who normally work the agreed or award hours for a full-time employee in their occupation and received pay for any part of the reference period. If agreed or award hours do not apply, employees are regarded as full-time if they ordinarily work 35 hours or more per week.

### **Individual arrangement**

An arrangement between an employer and an individual employee on the terms of employment (pay and/or conditions) for the employee. Common types of individual arrangements are individual contracts, letters of offer and common law contracts. Employees are classified to the Individual arrangement category if they have their pay set by an individual contract, individual agreement registered with a Federal or State industrial tribunal or authority (e.g. Australian Workplace Agreement), common law contract (including for award or agreement free employees), or if they receive over-award payments by individual agreement.

However, the Fair Work Act 2009 does not allow the making of new individual employee agreements. Collective enterprise agreements contain a provision which allows flexibility in the workplace to be achieved by agreement between an employer and individual employee. Agreements which existed under the Workplace Relations Act will continue in existence under the Fair Work Act 2009 as 'agreement-based transitional instruments'. These are defined by the Fair Work (Transitional and Consequential Amendments) Act 2009 (TA Act).

### **Industry**

Industry is classified according to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC), 2006 (cat. no. 1292.0).

### **Junior rate**

Payment at a proportion of the full adult rate stipulated in an award, agreement or the National Minimum Wage Order in the relevant jurisdiction, based on age.

### **Jurisdiction**

The workplace relations jurisdiction (i.e. federal or state) under which an employee is deemed to be for pay-setting purposes, based on the jurisdiction of the employer.

### **Managerial employees**

Employees who have strategic responsibilities in the conduct or operations of the

organisation and/or are in charge of a significant number of employees. These employees usually do not have an entitlement to paid overtime. Includes professionally qualified staff who primarily perform managerial tasks in conjunction with utilising their professional skills. Owner managers of incorporated enterprises are regarded as Managerial employees.

### **Method of setting pay**

How an employee's pay is set. Methods are classified to one of the following categories: Award only; Collective agreement; Individual arrangement; or Owner manager of incorporated enterprise.

### **Non-managerial employees**

Employees who are not Managerial employees (as defined above), including non-managerial professionals and some employees with supervisory responsibilities.

### **Occupation**

Occupation is classified according to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO), 2013) (cat. no. 1220.0).

### **Ordinary time cash earnings**

Payment for award, standard or agreed hours of work, including allowances, penalty payments, payments by measured result and regular bonuses and commissions. Ordinary time cash earnings are inclusive of amounts salary sacrificed. Excluded are non-cash components of salary packages, overtime payments, retrospective pay, pay in advance, leave loadings, severance pay, and termination and redundancy payments.

### **Ordinary time hours paid for**

Award, standard or agreed hours of work, paid for at the ordinary time rate. Included is stand-by or reporting time which is part of standard hours of work, and that part of annual leave, paid sick leave and long service leave taken during the reference period.

Hours paid for could not be provided for Managerial employees where there was no relationship between earnings and hours paid for. As a result, data for hours paid for and hourly cash earnings are only produced for employees with a link between earnings and hours.

### **Overtime cash earnings**

Payment for hours in excess of award, standard or agreed hours of work.

### **Overtime hours paid for**

Hours which are in excess of award, standard or agreed hours of work. Overtime hours paid for was not collected for Managerial employees.

### **Owner manager of incorporated enterprise**

A person who works in their own incorporated enterprise, that is, a business entity which is registered as a separate legal entity to its members or owners (also known as a limited liability company). Owner managers of incorporated enterprises are presented separately in estimates by method of setting pay.

## **Part-time employees**

Employees who normally work less than the agreed or award hours for a full-time employee in their occupation. If agreed or award hours do not apply, employees are regarded as part-time if they ordinarily work less than 35 hours per week.

## **Permanent or fixed term employees**

Permanent employees are usually employed on an ongoing basis and are entitled to paid annual and sick leave. Fixed term employees are employed for a specified period of employment, and may be entitled to paid leave.

## **Reference period**

The survey refers to the last pay period ending on or before 18 May 2018. All estimates of earnings and hours in this release are weekly. For employees paid other than weekly, estimates of earnings and hours have been converted to a weekly basis.

## **Salary sacrifice**

Salary sacrifice is defined as an arrangement where an employee agrees to forgo part of their pre-tax salary in return for benefits. Common types of salary sacrifice arrangements include pre-tax contributions to superannuation funds and novated leases for motor vehicles.

## **SAS / SPSS / STATA**

Data analysis and statistical software systems.

## **Sector**

Public sector comprises local government authorities and all government departments and agencies created by, or reporting to, the Commonwealth, or State/Territory Parliaments. Private sector comprises all organisations not classified as public sector.

## **Total hours paid for**

The sum of ordinary time hours paid for plus overtime hours paid for.

## **Weekly total cash earnings**

The sum of weekly ordinary time cash earnings plus weekly overtime cash earnings.

# **Quality declaration**

## **Quality declaration**

### **Institutional environment**

Confidentialised Unit Record Files (CURFs) are released in accordance with the conditions specified in the Statistics Determination section of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*. This

ensures that confidentiality is maintained while enabling micro level data to be released. More information on the confidentiality practices associated with CURFs can be found on the About CURF Microdata page.

For information on the institutional environment of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), including the legislative obligations of the ABS, financing and governance arrangements, and mechanisms for scrutiny of ABS operations, please see ABS Institutional Environment.

## **Relevance**

The May 2018 Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours (EEH) produces estimates of the composition and distribution of employee earnings, the hours they are paid for, and the methods used to set their pay (i.e. award only, collective agreement, or individual arrangement).

The May 2018 EEH data are a key element of labour market information. The principal objective is to facilitate the analysis and monitoring of economic aspects of the Australian labour market. The survey is the only source of earnings and hours paid for data by various methods of setting pay.

The May 2018 EEH Expanded CURF contains many data items available from the survey, with the main exception being States and Territories. Some of the key data items on the Expanded CURF include:

- Weekly earnings - Ordinary time, Overtime, Amounts salary sacrificed, and Total earnings (available as continuous variables)
- Hours paid for - Ordinary time, Overtime, and Total hours paid for (available as continuous variables)
- Methods of setting pay
- Rate of pay - Adult, junior, apprentice or trainee, and disability
- Age
- Employee characteristics - Sex, Full-time/Part-time status, Managerial status, Occupation (available at the 1, 2 and 3 digit ANZSCO level)
- Business characteristics - Industry (available at the 1 digit ANZSIC level) and Employer unit size

For further details on the content of the Expanded CURF, please see the data item list on the Downloads tab.

## **Timeliness**

The reference period for the most recent Employee Earnings and Hours Survey was the last pay period ending on or before 18 May 2018. Results from the survey were released on 22 January 2019 in the publication Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia, May 2018 (cat. no. 6306.0).

EEH Expanded CURFs from the 2006, 2010, 2012, 2014 and 2016 surveys are also available.

## **Accuracy**

The May 2018 EEH CURF generally contains finer levels of detail of data items than what is otherwise published in Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia, May 2018 (cat. no. 6306.0). For more information on the level of detail provided, see the associated data item

listings available from the Downloads tab.

Steps to confidentialise the microdata are taken in such a way as to maximise the usefulness and accuracy of the content while maintaining the confidentiality of respondents selected in the survey. As a result, it may not be possible to exactly reconcile all the statistics produced from the microdata with other published statistics. For further information on microdata confidentiality, refer to *How the ABS keeps your information confidential*.

## **Coherence**

The Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours has been conducted either annually or biennially since 1975. Since 1996 the survey has been conducted biennially. The conceptual framework used for this survey and key changes over time are described in *Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods* (cat. no. 6102.0.55.001).

## **Interpretability**

Microdata: Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia, May 2018 (cat. no. 6306.0.55.001) is a key source of information when using the Expanded CURF. It includes:

- Survey objectives, content, methods and design
- Data quality and interpretation
- Output data items
- Information about the availability of results
- Content of the Expanded CURF file

Further information about the Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours is available in the Explanatory Notes and Technical Note in *Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia, May 2018* (cat. no. 6306.0) and in *Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods* (cat. no. 6102.0.55.001).

## **Accessibility**

Microdata products are only available to approved users. Users wishing to access microdata should read the *How to Apply for Microdata* web page before applying for access. Users should also familiarise themselves with information available via the *Microdata Entry Page*.

A full list of all available microdata can be viewed via the *List of expected and available Microdata*.

Any queries regarding access to microdata can be forwarded to [microdata.access@abs.gov.au](mailto:microdata.access@abs.gov.au) or phone (02) 6252 7714.

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